

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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| JAMES MUNSON, |) | |
| |) | |
| Plaintiff, |) | |
| |) | |
| vs. |) | CIVIL NO. 10-cv-52-JPG |
| |) | |
| DONALD HULICK, et al., |) | |
| |) | |
| Defendants. |) | |

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

GILBERT, District Judge:

Plaintiff, an inmate at the Menard Correctional Center, brings this action for deprivations of his constitutional rights pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Plaintiff seeks injunctive and monetary relief for alleged violations of his Eighth Amendment rights. This case is now before the Court for a preliminary review of the complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, which provides:

- (a) **Screening.**– The court shall review, before docketing, if feasible or, in any event, as soon as practicable after docketing, a complaint in a civil action in which a prisoner seeks redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity.
- (b) **Grounds for Dismissal.**– On review, the court shall identify cognizable claims or dismiss the complaint, or any portion of the complaint, if the complaint–
 - (1) is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim on which relief may be granted; or
 - (2) seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.

28 U.S.C. § 1915A.

An action or claim is frivolous if “it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact.” *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989). An action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted if it does not plead “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” *Bell*

Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 590 U.S. 544, 570 (2007). A complaint is plausible on its face “when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1949 (2009). Although the Court is obligated to accept factual allegations as true, some factual allegations may be so sketchy or implausible that they fail to provide sufficient notice of a plaintiff’s claim. *Brooks v. Ross*, 578 F.3d 574, 581 (7th Cir. 2009). Additionally, Courts “should not accept as adequate abstract recitations of the elements of a cause of action or conclusory legal statements.” *Id.* At the same time, however, the factual allegations of a *pro se* complaint are to be liberally construed. *Rodriguez v. Plymouth Ambulance Service*, 577 F.3d 816, 821 (7th Cir. 2009).

THE COMPLAINT

Plaintiff alleges that he has been confined in the North I building at Menard Correctional Center since 2006. Plaintiff alleges that the conditions in the North I building - either alone or in combination - violate the Eighth Amendment’s guarantee that no person shall be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment. In support of his claim, Plaintiff asserts the following “laundry list” of conditions in the North I building: (1) inadequate cell size (40 square feet total in cell; 2 men to a cell) and confinement in said cells for approximately 21 to 22 hours per day; (2) lack of exercise; (3) inadequate lighting; (4) peeling paint (possibly containing lead) that sometimes gets into his food; (5) inadequate ventilation (cell temperatures reaching 115 to 120 degrees);¹ (6) inadequate cleaning supplies for the cells; (7) inadequate personal hygiene items for prisoners; (8) exposure to mold; and (9) exposure to possible asbestos fibers.

¹ For the purposes of this complaint, the Court assumes Plaintiff means degrees Fahrenheit. If Plaintiff means degrees Celsius, then such temperatures become incredible (115 degrees Celsius is about 239 degrees Fahrenheit).

Plaintiff asserts that do to these conditions he has suffered the following physical problems:

- (1) pain (both overall and, specifically, in his lower back) from lack of exercise and inability to sit upright in his cell (except on the toilet which then causes numbness) and aggravation of an existing “neuroanatomy” medical condition;
- (2) loss of muscle strength;
- (3) sinus problems (sneezing, etc.);
- (4) eye pain and deteriorating eye sight; and
- (5) mental stress.

Plaintiff asserts that the named Defendants were actually aware of the conditions in North I building from the grievances that he has filed and from grievances filed by other inmates confined in the North I building. Plaintiff contends, however, that the named Defendants have been deliberately indifferent to these conditions and fail to correct them.

DISCUSSION

The Constitution “does not mandate comfortable prisons.” *Rhodes v. Chapman*, 452 U.S. 337, 349 (1981). The Eighth Amendment requires that a prison inmate be housed under “humane conditions” and provided with “adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical care.” *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 832 (1994). In order to show a constitutional violation, Plaintiff must meet both the objective and subjective test established under *Farmer*. Specifically, Plaintiff must demonstrate “(1) that he suffered a sufficiently serious deprivation and (2) the [defendant] acted with ‘deliberate indifference’ to his conditions of confinement.” *Sain v. Wood*, 512 F.3d 886, 893-94 (7th Cir. 2008) (citing *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 837). Applying these principles to the instant complaint, the Court finds that Plaintiff’s Eighth Amendment claim survives threshold review under § 1915A and should not be dismissed at this time.

Also before the Court is Plaintiff’s motion for appointment of counsel (Doc. 3). There is no absolute right to appointment of counsel in a civil case. *Cook v. Bounds*, 518 F.2d 779 (4th Cir.

1975); *Peterson v. Nadler*, 452 F.2d 754 (8th Cir. 1971). When presented with a request to appoint counsel, the Court must make the following inquiries: “(1) has the ... plaintiff made a reasonable attempt to obtain counsel or effectively been precluded from doing so and (2) given the difficulty of the case, does the plaintiff appear competent to litigate it himself.” *Pruitt v. Mote*, 503 F.3d 647, 654-55 (7th Cir. 2007). With regard to the first step of the inquiry, there is no indication at all whether Plaintiff has attempted to obtain counsel or been effectively precluded from doing so. Therefore, Plaintiff’s motion for appointment of counsel (Doc.3) will be denied without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

The Clerk is **DIRECTED** to prepare Form 1A (Notice of Lawsuit and Request for Waiver of Service of Summons) and Form 1B (Waiver of Service of Summons) for Defendants **Hulick, Gaetz, Walker, and Randle**. The Clerk shall forward those forms, USM-285 forms submitted by Plaintiff, and sufficient copies of the complaint to the United States Marshal for service.

The United States Marshal is **DIRECTED**, pursuant to Rule 4(c)(2) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, to serve process on Defendants **Hulick, Gaetz, Walker, and Randle** in the manner specified by Rule 4(d)(2) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Process in this case shall consist of the complaint, applicable forms 1A and 1B, and this Memorandum and Order. For purposes of computing the passage of time under Rule 4(d)(2), the Court and all parties will compute time as of the date it is mailed by the Marshal, as noted on the USM-285 form.

With respect to former employees of Illinois Department of Corrections who no longer can be found at the work address provided by Plaintiff, the Department of Corrections shall furnish the Marshal with the Defendant’s last-known address upon issuance of a court order which states that the information shall be used only for purposes of effectuating service (or for proof of service,

should a dispute arise) and any documentation of the address shall be retained only by the Marshal. Address information obtained from I.D.O.C. pursuant to this order shall not be maintained in the court file, nor disclosed by the Marshal.

The United States Marshal shall file returned waivers of service as well as any requests for waivers of service that are returned as undelivered as soon as they are received. If a waiver of service is not returned by a defendant within **THIRTY (30) DAYS** from the date of mailing the request for waiver, the United States Marshal shall:

- Request that the Clerk prepare a summons for that defendant who has not yet returned a waiver of service; the Clerk shall then prepare such summons as requested.
- Personally serve process and a copy of this Order upon the defendant pursuant to Rule 4 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and 28 U.S.C. § 566(c).
- Within ten days after personal service is effected, the United States Marshal shall file the return of service for the defendant, along with evidence of any attempts to secure a waiver of service of process and of the costs subsequently incurred in effecting service on said defendant. Said costs shall be enumerated on the USM-285 form and shall include the costs incurred by the Marshal's office for photocopying additional copies of the summons and complaint and for preparing new USM-285 forms, if required. Costs of service will be taxed against the personally served defendant in accordance with the provisions of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(d)(2) unless the defendant shows good cause for such failure.

Plaintiff is **ORDERED** to serve upon defendant or, if appearance has been entered by counsel, upon that attorney, a copy of every further pleading or other document submitted for consideration by this Court. He shall include with the original paper to be filed with the Clerk of the Court a certificate stating the date that a true and correct copy of any document was mailed to defendant or his counsel. Any paper received by a district judge or magistrate judge which has not been filed with the Clerk or which fails to include a certificate of service will be disregarded by the Court.

Defendants are **ORDERED** to timely file an appropriate responsive pleading to the complaint, and shall not waive filing a reply pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(g).

Pursuant to Local Rule 72.1(a)(2), this cause is **REFERRED** to a United States Magistrate Judge for further pre-trial proceedings.

Further, this entire matter is hereby **REFERRED** to a United States Magistrate Judge for disposition, as contemplated by Local Rule 72.2(b)(2) and 28 U.S.C. § 636(c), *should all the parties consent to such a referral*.

Plaintiff's motion for appointment of counsel (Doc. 3) is **DENIED** without prejudice.

Plaintiff is under a continuing obligation to keep the Clerk and each opposing party informed of any change in his whereabouts. This shall be done in writing and not later than seven (7) days after a transfer or other change in address occurs.

If Plaintiff does not comply with this Order, this case will be dismissed for failure to comply with an order of this Court. FED.R.CIV.P. 41(b); *see generally Ladien v. Astrachan*, 128 F.3d 1051 (7th Cir. 1997); *Johnson v. Kamminga*, 34 F.3d 466 (7th Cir. 1994).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: July 7, 2010.

s/ J. Phil Gilbert
U. S. District Judge